



Washington State Legislature

Many of you have contacted us about the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposal to construct a transmission line east of Interstate 5 from a new substation in Troutdale, Ore., through Clark County and into Cowlitz County, ending at a new substation in Castle Rock. We appreciate knowing your opinions and understand our elected federal representatives and BPA are hearing from you also. That's good.

Like you, we were caught off guard by BPA's announcement of this proposal. Having made decisions about roads and other infrastructure improvements in the Legislature, we can appreciate the goal of improving the region's power grid and ensuring that electricity flows where and when it is needed. However, we know how you feel about property rights, property values and property taxes – very much the way we feel about them. We also know how this proposal affects and threatens those values. A lot of heartache and anger could have been prevented had BPA done a better job of involving the people of our communities in coming up with the proposed route options for the transmission line.

Unfortunately, we can't change what has transpired to this point, so our priority is making sure the process is fair for the affected property owners – especially those whose homes are close to the potential transmission lines. We will work to ensure BPA takes into account how proposed routes would affect the quality of life in the areas impacted.

The deadline for comments to BPA has been extended to Dec. 14 because of concerns we and many others expressed. If you haven't done so already, take time to study the proposal (www.bpa.gov/go/i5), consider the impacts, and use one of the forms (available at <http://www.bpa.gov/corporate/i-5-eis/documents.cfm>, under "Scoping Documents") to describe the impacts -- then be sure to get them to BPA.

Some residents have expressed to us concerns about whether their comments will make a difference to BPA. We believe so, knowing how input from the public affects decisions made at our state Capitol. If you and a group of your neighbors or neighborhood association want to meet and discuss the impacts before submitting your comments, and would like to invite us to attend, please contact us and we will join you if possible.

While we have experience dealing with the federal government and with controversial infrastructure projects, the BPA proposal is different. It is not clear yet how much influence we and other state elected officials or state agencies can have on whether and where a new transmission line is constructed. We are looking into that.

We know we cannot guarantee an outcome, but we pledge to do all we can to make sure the citizens of our district are treated fairly and to minimize the impact of this project if and when it moves forward.

Senator Joseph Zarelli

Representative Ed Orcutt

Representative Jaime Herrera